

ACEC NEWS

JULY 2023 | VOLUME 26 | ISSUE 07



**THANK YOU FOR
ATTENDING THE
ACEC PICNIC!**

See page 4 for story

PHOTOS FROM
ACEC IN THE
COMMUNITY

LEGISLATORS
VISIT ACEC

YOUTH TOUR
UPDATE



A MESSAGE FROM Your General Manager

Hollie McCormick
EVP/General Manager

FACTORS THAT IMPACT ELECTRICITY PRICES

I was recently asked by one of our newer employees about what impacts electricity prices. We talked about how the daily cost of living seems to have increased across the board.

Just as inflation has impacted everything from the price of gasoline to the price of groceries, costs for the fuels required to produce electricity have also seen a lot of fluctuation. This is a timely topic, so I wanted to help explain some of the factors that impact electricity prices in this month's newsletter.

While there is no short answer, there are a few key elements that impact electricity prices and rates. Some of these factors Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative can manage, some of them you can impact and other factors are beyond our control. So, let me break it down.

There are three primary parts to your monthly electric bill: a service availability charge, an energy charge per kWh and a Power Cost Adjustment (PCA). To understand your total energy costs and what impacts your bill, lets unpack one piece at a time.

The first is a fixed monthly service availability charge, which covers the costs associated with providing electricity to your home. This includes equipment, materials, labor and operating costs necessary to serve each meter in Allamakee-Clayton's service territory, regardless of the amount of energy used,

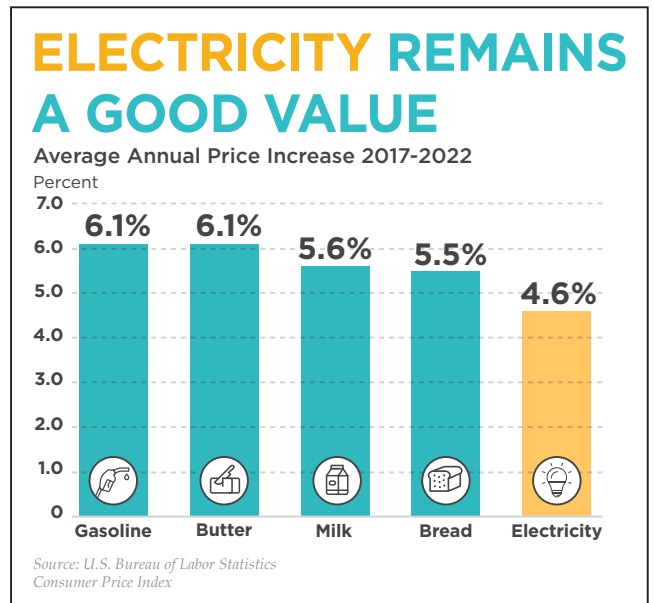
the time of day or the existing weather conditions. In order to ensure the reliable service you expect and deserve, we must maintain the local system, including power lines, substations and other necessary equipment. Like many other businesses, we've experienced supply chain issues and steep cost increases for some of our basic equipment. For example, the cost for a distribution transformer (which looks like a long metal can at the top of a power pole) went from \$690 in 2020 to \$1,133 this year, and wait times to receive this essential equipment are up several weeks. Because we are a not-for-profit cooperative, some of these expenses must be passed on to our members.

Another component of your monthly bill is the kWh charge, which covers how much energy you consume. You've likely noticed the amount of energy you use can vary from month to month and is typically impacted by extreme temperatures. When temperatures soar or dip, your cooling and heating equipment run longer, which increases your home energy use. Regardless, energy consumption is an area that you have some control over, and you can lower your monthly bill by actively reducing energy use. Your thermostat is a great place to start, just a few degrees cooler or warmer, can equate to savings.

The last component of your bill is the Power Cost Adjustment or PCA. PCA is a line item on your electric bill that can be a charge or a credit. When the cost of power is higher than expected, a charge is used to recover the added costs. When the cost of power is lower than expected, a credit is applied to pass along those savings to members. The PCA will increase during times of higher fuel prices and decrease during lower fuel prices. This means the cost of power that ACEC purchases from Dairyland Power varies due to the natural gas market. Simply stated, sometimes we're issued a credit when fuels costs are low, and when they're high, we are charged more. The PCA covers fuel costs and other power cost fluctuations without having to continually restructure electricity rates.

I hope this information sheds light on some of the factors that impact electricity prices. While we can't control the weather or the rising costs of fuels, please know ACEC is always striving to keep costs down.

We're here to help you, too. Contact us if you have questions about your energy bill or for advice on how to save energy at home. ■



BOARD BRIEFS | June 26 Meeting

- Reviewed Top 50 accounts
- Approved Employee Handbook
- Approved Eide Bailly for three year audit proposal
- Discussed Power Cost Adjustment and how it works
- Approved conversion of Line of Credit to long term debt

ACEC Reps Return from Youth Tour Trip



ACEC selected Olivia Marti and Natalie Brynes to represent the Co-op during the national Youth Tour.

It was a trip of a lifetime for Waukon High School students Natalie Byrnes and Olivia Marti. The duo represented Allamakee-Clayton Electric Cooperative on the National Electric Cooperative Youth Tour of Washington, D.C. from June 18-21. A total of 38 student leaders represented the state of Iowa.

“I had a great time at the Youth Tour! I think that it is such a wonderful opportunity that they offer for the youth of America to see our nation's history and get a better understanding of how it came to be today. From seeing the constitution to eating at Ben's Chili Bowl (The first restaurant in DC President Obama visited after inauguration), I had one amazing experience after another with wonderful like-minded students from across our great state,” said ACEC representative Olivia Marti. “I was beyond proud to explore this new district with such a great group of true Iowans. Bonding over exploring the big-city mindset (such as honking which no one would ever dare to do in small-town IA) showed me just how fortunate I am that I not only get to live in America but that I get to be a part of such a kind community.”



Olivia and Natalie said their days were jam-packed with adventure, including a visit to Mt. Vernon.

The power of human connections

During the trip, Olivia was nominated by her peers to represent Iowa at the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association's Youth Leadership Council. As a part of this council, Olivia will meet with the YLC virtually from August until March. She'll also attend the NRECA's PowerXchange meeting in San Antonio next year. #771-25 (PV)

“I am so excited to meet other students from across the country and see how they get more involved with their cooperatives. I already have so many ideas that I can't wait to start adapting to best suit my cooperative and help get youth involved in this community,” she said. “As I enter my senior year, I hope that this experience will help me decide which path is best for me and determine which aspects I want to incorporate into my future career. I love my community and understand how important support is, something that I can't wait to share with others!”

Each year in June, high school students participate in this week-long program to gain experience in government operations, the electric cooperative business model, and today's pressing issues in the energy industry. Students met their elected officials in the U.S. House and Senate, toured historic sites, and ran a Snack Cooperative.

In addition to taking in the sights of the nation's capital, all the state groups convened for the Rural Electric Youth Day, sponsored by the NRECA, to learn from public figures and other inspirational speakers.

Since 1958, Iowa's electric cooperatives have sponsored high school students to visit their U.S. congressional delegations, energy and grassroots government education sessions, and sightseeing in Washington. Students are selected for the Youth Tour by their local electric cooperative. ACEC will begin accepting applications for the 2024 Youth Tour in December. For more information, visit IowaYouthTour.com. ■

SUMMER FUN WITH OUR MEMBERS

ACEC at the Postville fair, parade and member appreciation picnic



AC Skyways customer service representative Staci Malcom waves to the crowd during the Postville parade.



John Foels was all smiles during the parade on June 16.



Lana and Caleb Dahlstrom, New Albin, check out the Tesla during the fair.



Harpers Ferry residents Jim and Jan Pfiffner were ready to grab some food before checking out the show animals.



Owen Bentley, Castalia, stands next to his pen of lambs.



Nanferd and Judy Felke enjoyed the ACEC Member Appreciation Picnic June 29. They've been Co-op members for 35 years.



Greyson Walz, 11, West Union, was all smiles during a break from showing.



Enjoying a trip down the bounce house obstacle slide were, from left – Lucas Connor, Cooper Bakewell, Hudson Bakewell and Ella Bakewell.



Getting ready to show at the Postville Big Four Fair were, from left – Alexis Oakland, 16, Elgin; Kylie Oakland, 18, Elgin; Kasydi Meyer, 18, West Union.



IT Manager Jeni Kolsrud dishes up soft-served ice cream during the ACEC picnic.



Madden Fink, 7, and her grandmother Luann Fink, Randalia, try their hand at one of the lawn games.

The power of human connections



Celia Klemp, 10, Clermont, launches a ball at the catapult game.

PRIZE WINNERS!

Milwaukee Tower Light
Bob Swenson, Clermont

\$25 Bill Credit

Gail Lansing, Waukon

Dick Dage, Waukon

Dorothy Jarmes, Postville

ACEC Blanket

Mary Keatley, Waukon

Becky Engelhardt, Postville

Ervin Bugenhagen, Luana

Theresa Bries, Monona

Alan Ruff, Farmersburg

ACEC Tumbler

Lois Garms, Monona

Lew Bishop, West Union

Lucena Phelps, Elkader

Nile Zieman, Luana

ACEC Ice/Hot Pack

Phil Waldbeser, Elgin

Sharon Houg, Elgin

Doreen Bries, Monona

Rose Lansing, Elgin

Mike Kruckenberg, Postville



Ryker Dillon, 8, Des Moines, poses in one of the ACEC buckets.

Two Local Legislators Visit ACEC in June

ACEC hosted two local legislators during June. Congresswoman Ashley Hinson visited ACEC's offices on June 2. On June 8 Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig stopped by our headquarters for an informal chat and tour of the facilities.

The congresswoman from Iowa's Second District visited ACEC as a part of her second 22-County Tour for 2023. Also present were State Representative Anne Osmundson, Dairyland Power Cooperative Economic Development Manager Jenny Kuderer-Radcliffe and Dairyland Government Relations Manager Jennifer Shilling.

During the hour-long discussion, Executive Vice President/General Manager Hollee McCormick discussed an "all-of-the-above energy strategy" rather than a swift switch to exclusively renewable energy. A big topic of discussion was ACEC's deployment of fiber optic internet to customers in Northeast Iowa. ACEC IT Specialist Matt Marting discussed the efforts of ACEC over the past 18 years to bring high-speed internet to areas that are underserved.

Less than a week later, Secretary Naig and his son Zach, along with Iowa House Representative Chad Ingels, visited the Co-op as a part of Naig's annual 99-county tour. During the informal conversation, Naig learned more about the Co-op and the type of member-owners served by the utility. He also discussed the advances in technology related to agriculture and how ACEC is working to provide fiber internet to areas currently underserved. Members Services Manager Ryan Wagner also discussed use of solar and renewable energy at ACEC. ■



Congresswoman Ashley Hinson visited the ACEC Headquarters in June to learn more about what issues are at the forefront for the Co-op. Pictured are, from left – Member Services Manager Ryan Wagner; IT Specialist Matt Marting; Board President Jeff Bradley; Dairyland Power Cooperative Government Relations Manager Jennifer Shilling; Economic Development and Community Relations Manager Brenda Hackman; Executive Vice President/General Manager Hollee McCormick; Ashley Hinson; Information Technology Manager Jeni Kolsrud; Dairyland Economic Development Manager Jenny Kuderer-Radcliffe; Director of Operations and Engineering Jason Troendle; State Representative Anne Osmundson.



Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig learned about technology deployment and ACEC operations during his visit last month. Pictured are, from left – ACEC Executive Vice President/General Manager Hollee McCormick; Zach Naig; Mike Naig; Members Services Manager Ryan Wagner; Economic Development and Community Relations Manager Brenda Hackman; Iowa House Representative Chad Ingels.

Beware of Juice Jacking

By Dan Gerard
Illinois Country Living magazine

All communication stops, productivity is halted, and anxiety starts to set in. You wonder how you are going to pass the time. What happened? Your cell phone battery has died while waiting on a 2-hour layover at the airport. No problem, right? You think all you need to do is find the nearest USB charging station and plug in, but not so fast. There are risks associated with using public charging stations.

The FBI recently warned consumers against using free public charging stations, saying scammers have managed to hijack public chargers and can infect devices with

malware or software that can give hackers access to your phone, tablet or computer.

"Avoid using free charging stations in airports, hotels or shopping centers," a tweet from the FBI's Denver field office said. "Bad actors have figured out ways to use public USB ports to introduce malware and monitoring software onto devices. Carry your own charger and USB cord and use an electrical outlet instead." The Federal Communications Commission has also warned about "juice jacking," a term used for the malware loading scheme. #4933

While it may be convenient to use public

phone chargers when your phone battery nears the zero mark, there are security risks associated with using them. Public phone chargers can pose a security risk as they may transmit malware that steals your personal information. Consumer devices plugged into compromised USB ports can be hijacked through software that can siphon off usernames and passwords.

It is generally recommended to avoid using public phone chargers, if possible. If you must use them, make sure to take appropriate precautions, such as using a portable charger

Continued

Beware of Juice Jacking

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or a data blocker (which disables data transfer), and only using reputable sources. It is a good idea to regularly back up your phone and update your security software to minimize the risk of potential security breaches.

Here are some ways to protect yourself from these risks:

Bring your own charger. The easiest way to protect yourself is to bring your own charger and plug it into an electrical outlet.

Use a portable charger. If you're frequently on the go, invest in a portable charger to keep your phone battery charged without relying on public chargers.

Use a data blocker. A data blocker is a small device that you can plug into a USB port to block any data transfer between your device and the public charger. This prevents malware from being transferred onto your device.

Disable data transfer. Some phones have the option to disable data transfer when connected to a USB port. Make sure to enable this setting before using a public charger.

By taking these precautions, you can protect yourself from the security risks associated with public phone chargers. ■

PLUGGED IN: Electric Vehicle Update



JUNE

of miles driven: 367 miles

kWh's Charged: 106 kWh

Cost to Charge:

.13 x 106 kWh = **\$13.78**

The power of human connections

MEMBER RECIPES

Send your favorite recipes and/or recipe topics to Jennifer Achenbach, ACEC, PO Box 715, Postville, IA 52162 or email jachenbach@acrec.coop.

You'll receive a \$5 bill credit if your recipe is printed. Please note – recipes must be received by the 25th day of the month before the intended publication.

September – **GARDEN PRODUCE IDEAS**

ONE POT CREAMY TUSCAN PASTA

- 1 Tbsp. olive oil
- 12-16 oz. pork or chicken smoked sausage, sliced
- ½ c. diced onion
- 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 14.5 oz. can diced tomatoes
- 15 oz. can white beans, like great Northern, drained
- 12 oz. medium pasta shells
- 2 ½ c. chicken broth
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. dried basil
- 2 to 3 c. coarsely chopped fresh spinach (about 3 oz.)
- 1 to 2 c. shredded Monterrey Jack or mozzarella cheese
- ½ c. freshly grated Parmesan cheese
- Fresh basil and/or chopped green onions for garnish (optional)

Directions

In a deep skillet or pot, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the sliced sausage and brown on each side until golden, 2-3 minutes. Remove to a plate (keep as much oil in the pan as possible). Add the onions and garlic and cook until the onions turn translucent, stirring often, 3-4 minutes. To a blender, add the drained beans and diced tomatoes (undrained). Process until mostly smooth. To the skillet, add the blended tomato/bean mixture, shells, broth, salt and basil. Bring the mixture to a simmer over medium heat. Continue to simmer, stirring often to prevent sticking (moderate heat as needed), until the pasta is al dente, 12-14 minutes. There will still be a fair amount of thick, syrupy, liquid in the pan. If it's really dry, add a bit more broth. Stir in the cooked sausage and spinach. Taste and add additional salt and pepper, if needed (different brands of sausage will vary in seasonings and saltiness). Sprinkle the cheeses over the pasta. Cover with a

lid and let sit until melted (or if the pan is oven-safe, broil in the oven until the cheese is melted and bubbly). Garnish with fresh basil or chopped green onions and serve.

■ *Abby Edminster, Postville*

NO BAKE CHEESECAKE

- 1 Keeblers-Ready-Crust graham cracker crust
- 1 pkg. (8 oz) cream cheese, softened
- ⅓ c. sugar
- 1 c. (1/2 pt.) sour cream
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 1 8 oz. cool whip

Directions

Beat cream cheese until smooth. Gradually beat in sugar. Blend in sour cream and vanilla. Fold in whipping topping, blending well. Spoon into crust. Chill until set, at least 4 hours. Top with cherries or apples or whatever.

■ *Susan Horstman, Guttenberg*

BUTTERSCOTCH BARS

- 2 eggs
- ¾ c. butter
- 1 c. sugar
- 2 ½ c. crushed graham crackers
- 1 c. coconut
- ½ c. nuts
- 2 c. mini marshmallows
- ½ c. peanut butter
- 12 oz. butterscotch chips

Directions

Mix eggs, butter and sugar on medium heat. Boil for 3 minutes, stirring. Remove from heat, add crackers, nuts and coconut. Mix well. Add marshmallows and stir. Press in a 9"x13" pan. Melt peanut butter and chips together. Spread on top of bars. Chill.

■ *Dan Moon, Monona*



FIND YOUR SERVICE NUMBER

ACEC has hidden three Service Location numbers within this newsletter. The numbers are from different regions of our service area – **one is worth a \$10.00 bill credit, and two are worth a \$5 bill credit** if found. The service location number must be yours to claim the credit, and you need to notify us when you find it.



CONTACT ACEC

HEADQUARTERS

229 Highway 51 • PO Box 715
Postville, IA 52162

PHONE NUMBERS

LOCAL 563-864-7611

TOLL-FREE 888-788-1551

PAYMENT LINE 24/7 833-284-5051

UNDERGROUND CABLE LOCATING
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acrec.com

OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

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DPC

ACEC Board and Managers Attended DPC's Annual Meeting

Members of ACEC's Board of Directors and management team recently attended Dairyland Power Cooperative's Annual Meeting at the La Crosse Center. The theme of the meeting was ALL IN, representing Dairyland's commitment to its mission to improve the quality of life for cooperative members. "Dairyland is 100 percent all in on the clean energy transition as we look to bring significantly

more wind and solar to our generation portfolio, in addition to exploring zero-carbon nuclear and pumped energy storage systems," said President and CEO Brent Ridge. Miss America 2023 Grace Stanke, provided the keynote address: Energy Advocacy Beyond the Midwest: How the Culture of Wisconsin Influenced My Future. ■ #5730



Attending the Dairyland Annual Meeting were ACEC and some Northeast Iowa representatives at the annual meeting were, from left – director Mike Gibbs; director Bryce Wood; director Nelson Converse; director Jeff Bradley; director Roger Arthur; IT manager Jeni Kolsrud; Representative Michael Bergan; general manager Hollee McCormick; director Alan Steffens, economic development and community relations manager Brenda Hackman; director Cindy Heffern; director Jerry Keleher.

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